

# NATIVE AMERICAN ELDERS

## **Profile of the issue:**

The Native American elderly population of our country is a heterogeneous group. Comprised of approximately 250,000 people, these older adults come from 569 federally recognized tribes, (plus many more tribes that are not recognized.) Each tribe has its own unique culture, language, beliefs and customs. Despite these differences, there is general agreement that Native American elders are honored and respected by their families and communities, and they are considered to be the keepers of their tribes' language and heritage.

The Native American population in Snohomish County totals approximately 8,250. These numbers are based on the 2000 Census and include individuals who indicated their race solely as American Indian/Alaskan Native. In 2006, less than one percent (.8%) of the total population (699 persons) age 60 and older were non-Hispanic Native American. The majority of these elders were from the Tulalip Tribes, a few from the Stillaguamish Tribe (12 seniors), and the rest from other tribal entities.

There are two officially recognized tribes in Snohomish County - the Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe. Some members of the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe (with an official address in Skagit County) also reside in the County.

Organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Tulalip Tribes include the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish, along with some members of the Stillaguamish, Sultan and Pilchuck Tribes. The Tribe is the largest in the county, including more than 3,200 enrolled members. Of the enrolled members, 540 are considered seniors (50+) or elders (62+). Approximately 2,500 members live on the reservation.

Tribal services include health and dental clinics, a Medicare Outreach Program, mental health services, a diabetes program, along with many other services and support programs for tribal members. A congregate meal site operates five days a week at the Tribes' Senior Center, and over 60 older adults receive home delivered meals. Title VI funds are used for a portion of the nutrition services. An assisted living facility is located adjacent to the center.

The Stillaguamish Tribe offers many services to tribal members and the community-at-large. These include a health clinic, many wellness programs, and mental health counselors. A congregate meal site operates daily, using Title VI funds in a very limited manner.

In compliance with the 1989 Washington State Centennial Accord and a federal executive order signed in November of 2000, DSHS relates to American Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis. Revised in December of 2004, DSHS Administrative Policy No. 7.01 defines the Department's "commitment to consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes of Washington State...in the planning of DSHS service programs, to ensure quality and comprehensive service delivery to all American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington State."

The Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) and DSHS staff from regional and/or headquarters offices meet on a regular basis to write formal collaborative policies. In DSHS Region 3, Snohomish County LTC attends the Regional Tribal Coordinating Council as well as quarterly planning meetings with the Tribes.

In addition to participating in the full 7.01 planning meetings, Snohomish County has met separately with representatives from the Stillaguamish Tribe and the Tulalip Tribes. In 2007, County staff also conducted a focus group with staff from the Tulalip Tribes Senior Center, three of whom are seniors themselves.

At the Senior Center, staff members are experiencing a large increase in numbers of younger seniors accessing services. Identified needs included in-home caregiver training, training on Alzheimer's and other mental health issues, help with accessing disaster preparedness kits, and education on disease-specific conditions such as diabetes.

**Problem/Need Statement:**

Native American elders have historically been underserved by the traditional community service system. Developing new, culturally appropriate methods of connecting them to needed services is called for in order to increase their access to the service system.

**Goal:** To increase access to services for Native American elders in Snohomish County.

**Objective:** Develop a partnership with Native American advocates, service providers, tribal representatives and others that will enhance the connection between Native American elders and services.

**Measurable Activities:** See 7.01 Plan

**Policy 7.01 Implementation Plan**  
Timeframe: July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010  
**Snohomish County AAA**

Plan Due Dates: April 2 (Regional Plan submitted to Assistant Secretary) and April 30 (Assistant Secretary Plan submitted to IPSS) of each even-numbered year. Progress Report Due Dates: April 2 (Regional Plan submitted to Assistant Secretary) and April 30 (Assistant Secretary Plan submitted to IPSS) of each odd-numbered year.

Implementation Plan				Progress Report
(1) Goals/Objectives	(2) Activities	(3) Expected Outcome	(4) Lead Staff and Target Date	(5) Status Update for the Fiscal Year Starting Last July 1
1. Recognize, communicate and negotiate with Tribes on a Government to Government basis	Quarterly 7.01 meetings	In 2008/9, Stillaguamish Tribe did not wish to pursue a 7.01 plan based on lack of need for services and staffing issues.	AAA lead staff—Stefanie Novacek  Stillaguamish Tribe – Edward Reser	Stillaguamish Tribe has indicated some interest in reviewing possible mutual activities for this coming year.
2. Support tribal efforts to inform elders of available services and to educate elders on important issues.	Mail 2009-2010 Senior Source Resource Guide to Tulalip and Stillaguamish elders  Provide dementia information for seniors attending the Tulalip meal site, as well as for those receiving home delivered meals.  Collaborate with tribal staff to develop an educational lunch program focused on diabetes, dementia, or cancer for tribal elders.	Increased awareness of county services available to tribal elders.  Increased awareness of health promotion and prevention among tribal elders.	Stefanie Novacek & Susie Starrfield, LTCA  Virginia Carpenter, Tulalip Senior Center	The Senior Source was provided to Tulalip staff for distribution to all seniors and elders in May of 2009. Updated versions of this resource guide will continue to be provided to Tulalip Tribal elders each year.  Diabetes information was provided to Tulalip staff during the first quarter of 2008. Educational materials on dementia will be provided during 2009.  Meetings were held in June 2009 (at Tulalip elders breakfast and 7.01 meeting) to update plan.
3. Support tribal efforts to provide nutrition services to seniors and elders.	Provide nutrition services (food) and nutrition information for Tulalip Senior Center participants and homebound seniors.	Increase availability of nutritionally sound meals.  Increase tribal members' knowledge of nutrition requirements, diabetes management, etc.	Virginia Carpenter, Tulalip Senior Center  Susie Starrfield, LTCA  Martha Peppones, Senior Services of Snoh. County	During 2008, insulated carrier packs were provided to Tulalip Senior Center staff for use in delivering hot meals to homebound seniors.  Use of Title IIIC funding enabled Tulalip Senior Center to provide a new service - breakfast for approximately 15 seniors/elders per weekday.  Services continue to be provided for the congregate meals and home delivered meals.

### Policy 7.01 Implementation Plan

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4. Continue providing and/or facilitating technical assistance to tribes as needed	Topics to be determined by tribes but could include: Family caregiver and kinship care issues; Long Term Care ombudsman program ; Federal or State law or WAC changes.	Increased awareness and accessibility of services available to tribal elders.  Improved communication and planning around policy changes impacting tribes.	Helen Fenrich, Virginia Carpenter, Paula Cortez, Natalie Knapp, and Lahneen Fryberg - Tulalip Tribes  R3 IPSS Staff LTCA Staff	Renewed efforts will be made in 2009 to bring LTC Ombudsman information and resources to the reservation.
5. Implementation of Sno Co AAA's and Tribal Representatives contact list	Tribal contacts and AAA contacts to be emailed to IPSS, R3  Sno Co AAA will select a Tribal Liaison to be lead contact for local Tribes	Comprehensive contact list for both Tribes and AAA to enhance communication flow  Point of contact between AAA and Tribes	Helen Fenrich, Virginia Carpenter, Paula Cortez, Tulalip Tribes; R3 IPSS Staff Lead - Jerry Fireman, AAA Also: Susie Starrfield, AAA Stefanie Novacek, AAA	Completed
6. Invite Tribes to send representatives, at their discretion, to work groups and other events organized by LTCA .	LTCA will invite tribal representatives to participate in aging-related work groups and events such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snohomish County Coalition Against Elder Abuse</li> <li>• Aging Readiness Summit</li> <li>• Family Caregiver Coalition</li> <li>• Geriatric Mental Health Access Project</li> <li>• Falls Prevention Coalition</li> </ul>	Ability to provide services geared toward culturally appropriate service	Helen Fenrich, Virginia Carpenter, Kathy Hurd, and Paula Cortez, Tulalip Tribes  R3 IPSS Staff LTCA Staff and Providers	Ongoing

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7. Recruitment of AI/AN for Snohomish County available positions	Develop and maintain contacts of Tribal Representatives & Snohomish County AAA representatives to disseminate employment opportunities	Increase American Indian/Alaska Native employment within Snohomish County Government and other agencies	Julie Jefferson & Susie Starrfield	All job announcements from the Snohomish County and other governmental agencies are being shared with the tribes, through the assistance of Julie Jefferson, on an ongoing basis. At her request, job announcements will also be sent to Virginia Carpenter, Tulalip Senior Center.
8. Case management/ accessibility issues	Build relationships between AAA case managers & Tribal Elders; include case managers in different tribal functions involving Tribal elders, specifically Elders breakfast, advertise on channel 10, the elders newsletter and the See Yacht Sub-newspaper; have Tribal contact representatives accompany case managers to Tribal homes.  Assign a tribal contact to assist managers, to aide in completion of paperwork, apps, etc., in Tribal residences	Better access to services; enhance and make the assessment process more culturally appropriate for elders; improved level of trust; elders to gain information on a variety of different services.	Virginia Carpenter from Tulalip Tribes-Elder Services; Paula Cortez, Tulalip Tribes; John Peterson, Snohomish County AAA; Supervisor Bob Quirk from Senior Services of Snohomish County.	During 2009/10, LTCA staff along with County Case Management staff will renew efforts to schedule this meeting.
9. Cultural awareness	Involve tribes and Office of Indian Policy and Support Services in developing and conducting cultural awareness training for Snohomish County AAA and Human Services Department staff.	Increased awareness of tribal beliefs, customs, history, and governance. Improved ability to build relationships and deliver culturally appropriate services.	Julie Jefferson Susie Starrfield	The Snohomish County Human Services Department has an Inclusion Committee; its Training Subcommittee is responsible for planning department-wide training opportunities. In 2007, the Training Subcommittee brought two trainings on Mental Health Issues for Native Americans to the Department. LTCA staff will work with Julie Jefferson to explore other trainings for 2009/10.

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10. Recruitment of AI/AN for Snohomish County Council on Aging	Develop and maintain contacts of Tribal Representatives & Sno Co AAA representatives to disseminate advisory council opportunities	Increase American Indian/Alaska Native representation on Snohomish County advisory boards	Julie Jefferson, Paula Cortez & Helen Fenrich (Tulalip Tribes), & Joyce Frasu (AAA lead)	Completed. Helen Fenrich was appointed the Tribal representative on the Council on Aging. Term of service is three years (Jan. 2009 – Dec. 2011)